

USFK commander talks issues

Editor's Note: This is a series of monthly articles addressing issues and concerns of military forces serving with in U.S. Forces Korea. USFK Commander, General Thomas Schwartz, routinely visits the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines stationed on the Korean peninsula and conducts sensing sessions to receive feedback on issues ranging from military service to quality of life. Gen. Schwartz seeks to make serving in Korea an assignment of choice and uses sensing sessions as a means of focusing the USFK and service component commanders and staffs. The following topics were raised during recent visits. Not all issues can be corrected immediately and will require carrying them as ongoing CINC projects, with progress published routinely in this publication. Other issues are awaiting responses and will be reported in future releases.

Issue: What is the leave policy for soldiers coming straight from Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to Korea with no leave days? Can leave be advanced to soldiers during their tour in Korea?

Response: Leave is the same throughout the Army. In accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-10, soldiers without sufficient accrued leave (i.e. soldiers directly out of AIT) may be granted advance leave in anticipation of the accrual of leave during the remaining period of active duty. Our leaders must take an active role in monitoring a "new" soldiers' leave situation upon arrival to Korea, helping to ensure that unnecessary hardships are not imposed.

Issue: Are there any plans for looking into how mail is delivered in Korea? Any upgrades for the postal system?

Response: Almost all First Class letter mail is delivered to the addressee in Korea in ten days or less. Approximately 87 percent of this mail is delivered within seven days. Priority and Space Available Mail (less than 15 pounds and 60 inches) parcels mailed from the states generally take from five to 14 days, depending upon where in the U.S. they were mailed. Parcels mailed from the U.S. at the standard rate of postage can

take anywhere from three to six weeks, the average being about four weeks. These parcels travel by boat from San Francisco to Korea. Parcels from Korea mailed at the standard rate of postage are flown to the U.S. and are normally delivered within three weeks. Incoming mail is transported to Military Post Offices within 24 hours after arrival at the Kimpo Airport. It is made available to unit mail clerks the same day. Retrograde mail, picked up from drop boxes (mail boxes) in the morning, is delivered to Kimpo within hours of pick-up and flown to USPS gateway destinations the same day. The exception is mail from the Pusan and Taegu areas, which, because of the transit time to Kimpo, departs Korea the following day. With the exception of the boat mail, the mail system is pretty efficient. Many units have purchased and installed postal boxes for their individual members, including civilians. Nevertheless, I am commissioning a total review of our mail system. I agree with you, something needs to be done. I am on it and I will report the results to you.

Air Force releases technical, master sergeant promotion rates

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — The Air Force selected 7,031 of 18,038 eligible technical sergeants for promotion to master sergeant and 12,051 of 36,095 eligible staff sergeants for promotion to technical sergeant.

This represents an overall 38.98 percent selection rate for the 01E7 cycle and 33.39 percent selection rate for the 01E6 cycle. The master sergeant selection percentage stayed virtually tied with last year's percentage of 39.10, while this year's technical sergeant rate surged nearly six points beyond last year's already record showing of 27.64 percent.

For a list of selectees at Kunsan, see **Page 4**, or visit the Air Force Personnel Center's home page.

"This year's promotion announcement kicks off a great summer season for more than 19,000 of the Air Force's finest (noncommissioned officers)," Air Force Personnel Center officials said. "Never in our history has there been a better opportunity for highly qualified individuals to earn that next stripe."

As evidenced by the record setting technical sergeant promotion rate and the high selection percentage to master sergeant, advancement opportunity abounds for those willing to put forth the effort both on their jobs and while preparing for promotion exams, officials said.

"The increased promotion rates seen in the last few years are partly a result of the return to stable force structure and end-strength levels following years of

drawdown," officials said. "The primary reason for increased promotion rates is our transition to a higher percentage of 'Top Five' NCOs, previously at 48.5 percent of the enlisted force, now headed toward 56 percent over the next few years."

People who tested are expected to receive their score notices in mid-June, allowing them to see just how they stacked up against their peers. These score notices allow people to know how their Promotion Fitness Examination and Specialty Knowledge Test scores rank against those they are directly competing against for promotion within their Air Force Specialty Code.

The average selectee score for the master sergeant test cycle was 348.20 points based on the following:

—134.20 Enlisted Performance

Reports;

—71.72 Promotion Fitness Exam;
—65.63 Specialty Knowledge Test;
—27.91 Time in Grade;
—35.58 Time in Service; and
—11.68 Decorations.

The average selectee has 3.49 years time in grade and 16.71 years in service. Those selected will be promoted to master sergeant from August to July 2002.

The average selectee score for the technical sergeant test cycle was 331.99 points based on the following:

—132.60 Enlisted Performance Reports;
—62.99 Promotion Fitness Exam;
—57.03 Specialty Knowledge Test;
—41.25 Time in Grade;
—29.45 Time in Service;

and

—7.29 Decorations.

The average selectee has 5.83 years time in grade and 13.53 years in service. Those selected will also be promoted to technical sergeant from August to July 2002.



Kunsan judge wins top Army award

By Staff Sgt. Heather Shelton
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Maj. Steven Thompson, 8th Fighter Wing staff judge advocate's office, is the first Air Force member in the history of the Army Judge Advocate General's school to earn its prestigious Jones Award.

The school, located on the campus of the University of Virginia, is designed to train all newly appointed judges from each branch of the service. According to Thompson, along with his 44 classmates, he experienced an intense three weeks.

"This was a challenging course," Thompson said. "We all worked very hard and I was proud to accept such a special award."

Maj. Gen. William Moorman, Judge Advocate General, presented the award to Thompson.

"Maj. Thompson made quite an accomplishment," said Moorman. "He's reflected remarkably well on our department."

Thompson, who has approximately six weeks left at Kunsan, still has several goals to accomplish.

"We have three new attorneys in our office and two new paralegals," said the new judge. "We need to welcome our new co-workers, get up to speed and continue to provide the best legal service to the commanders and the first sergeants."

According to Col. Burt Field, 8th Fighter Wing commander, Thompson is another fine example of the men and women stationed at Kunsan.

"I think highly of all the men and women on the peninsula," said Field. "Thompson is a reflection of the motivated people that continue to accomplish our ever so important mission."



Airman Basic
Daphne Barbour



Pride of the Pack

Job: 8th Supply Squadron, Chemical Warfare Defense Element

Hometown: Panama City, Fla.

Follow-on: Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Family: Husband, Staff Sgt. Jason Barbour

Hobbies: Softball, honor guard, dancing

Nominees are selected for outstanding service and dedication to their unit. To nominate and individual, contact the member's group commander.